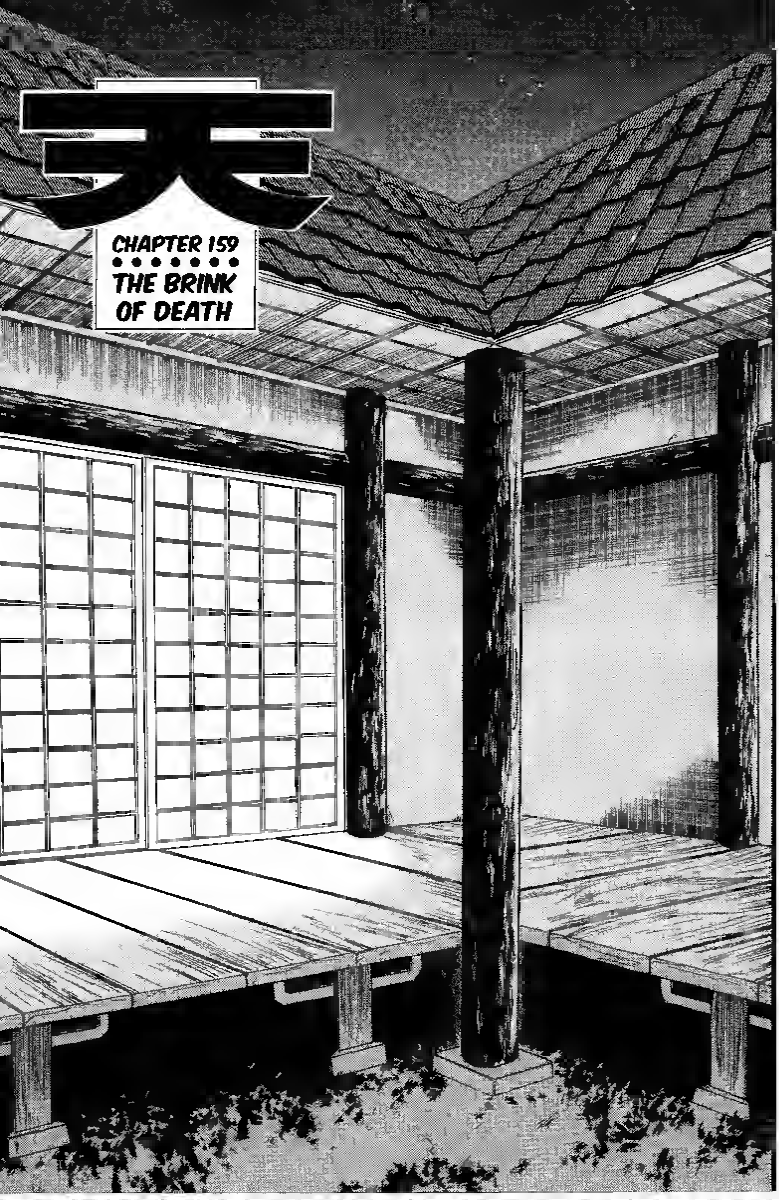

CHAPTER 159
THE BRINK OF DEATH

ON...!
NO

ACTIVATION OF THE MERCITRON ...!
URGH ...!

I KNOW IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN .....!
IT'S NO GOOD .....
TEN .....!

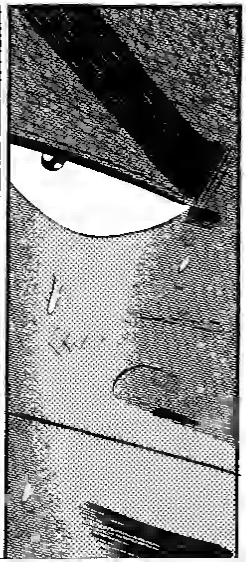
ガシ。。
ガシ!。
ゴゴ…
ヤラれ…。。

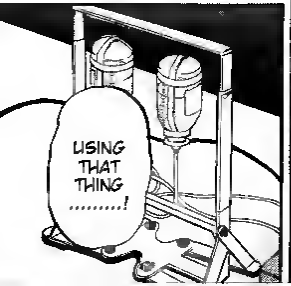
HEH HEH HEH ...
THANKS FOR COMING... TEN.....

JUST LIKE I REMEM-BER ...
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED ...
AS USUAL
YOU'VE GOT A GOOD LOOK IN YOUR EYES .....!

SO THIS IS IT, THEN ...
.....
THE MERCITRON SUIDICE MACHINE...!
クク
OF COURSE I HAVEN'T TESTED IT, BUT...
YEAH ...
カラ
THAT'S THE PLAN ...!
I'LL DIE PAINLESSLY WHILE I'M ASLEEP...

I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO BE THAT MUCH OF A COWARD ...!




USING THAT THING .....!

.....
チュッ…
.....
HEH HEH HEH …
.....
OH.....
ブー
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN..!
NO...
THAT WOULD BE A PRETTY BAD WAY TO GO...!
WAS I SUPPOSED TO RIP OUT MY STOMACH OR SOMETHING...?.

WHEN I CAME HERE...
HEH HEH...
THE ISSUE IS YOUR SUICIDE...!
IT'S THAT YOU'RE GOING TO DIE IN THE FIRST PLACE...!

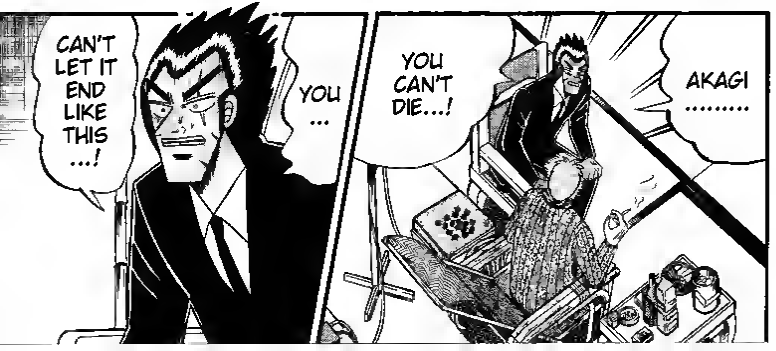
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO ABOUT IT...!
AND HEARD ABOUT THIS .....

WE LESSER PEOPLE
IF WE DECIDED THAT WAS WHAT HE WAS GOING TO DO, THEN THAT'S THAT...!
AKAGI SHIGERU .....
IF.....
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT ...!
YES... WE SHOULD KEEP OUR MOUTHS SHUT ...!

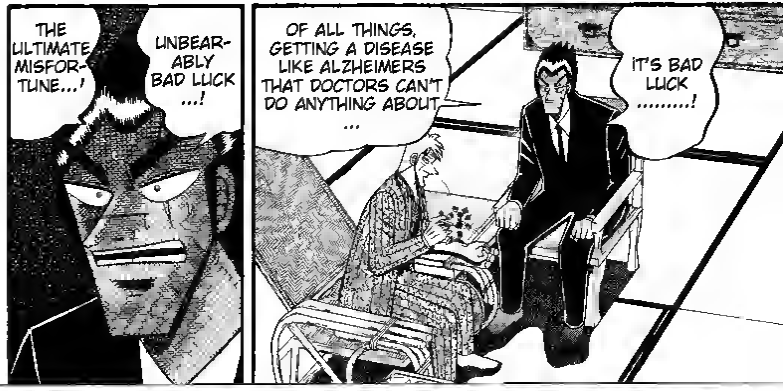
HA HA HA ...!
IN SHORT ...
YOU... WEREN'T NEUROTIC OR DEPRESSED OR ANYTHING ...
AS FAR AS I COULD TELL...
IN PARTI-CULAR ...
HEH HEH HEH ...
WE SHOULDN'T SAY ANYTHING ...!
SINCE YOU WERE SAYING IT WHILE OF OTHERWISE SOUND MIND
BUT...
I DID THINK THAT .....
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT .....!
SO LET'S BE QUIET AND SEE HIM TO HIS END...
.....

I'VE CHANGED MY MIND .....!

... ...
BUT...


CAN'T LET IT END LIKE THIS ...!
YOU ...
YOU CAN'T DIE...!
AKAGI .....

SURE .....
.....
oc O
OH...?


THE ULTIMATE MISFOR-TUNE...!
UNBEAR-ABLY BAD LUCK ...!
OF ALL THINGS, GETTING A DISEASE LIKE ALZHEIMERS THAT DOCTORS CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT ...
IT'S BAD LUCK .....!

EVEN IF...
IT'S STILL THE LIFE OF AKAGI SHIGERU THAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT...!
EVEN WHEN YOU COUNT THE DISEASE
BUT ...
EVEN WITH ALL OF THAT ...
EVEN IF IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE STARTING TO MAKE ALL KINDS OF MISTAKES
YOU'RE IN THE GRIP OF THE DISEASE ...
HEH HEH HEH ...
UNTIL THE END OF AKAGI SHIGERU'S LIFE .....!
THAT WILL STAY THE SAME
YOU'RE AKAGI SHIGE-RU ...!

HEH HEH HEH HEH ...
I SEE ...
I SEE ...
I UNDER-STAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.
I RESPECT IT.
AS IT IS ...!

WELL ...
YOU SEE
BUT...
THOSE THAT WANT TO ...
CAN GO AHEAD AND DO THAT ...!
LISTEN .....!
CAN'T YOU LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE.....?!
AKAGI ...!
BUT NOT ME.
I'D JUST LET IT RUN ITS COURSE TOO...
NORM-ALLY
THAT IF PEOPLE LEAVE THESE THINGS BE THEY'LL DIE NAT-URALLY
IT'S TRUE

I'LL BE ON THE BRINK OF DEATH IN A FEW YEARS...
SOMEBODY WOULD HAVE TO LOOK AFTER ME...
IF I LEAVE IT BE
BUT IN THIS CASE
MORE OR LESS .....
EVERYONE GETS THAT WAY
SO WHAT ...!
IT WOULD BE LIKE MY MIND WAS HALF ASLEEP
AND SOMEONE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF YOU... BUT
YOU SAID IT WOULD BE LIKE YOUR MIND WAS HALF ASLEEP
HUH...?
IT'S JUST GOING BACK TO THE BEGINNING .....!
REALLY .....

SO ON THE BRINK OF DEATH, WHEN YOU'RE ABOUT TO PASS FROM THIS WORLD
IN SHORT, IT'S THE STATE YOU'RE IN WHEN YOU ENTER THIS WORLD...!
THAT'S LIKE A BABY...
YOU'RE GIVING UP ON YOURSELF BEFORE THAT...
HEH HEH HEH ...
THAT'S NOT SO STRANGE ...!
BEFORE YOU GET THAT WAY, BUT...
AND GOING AHEAD WITH DYING ...
HEH HEH HEH ...
ANYBODY WOULD RATHER DO THAT THAN DIE, WOULDN'T THEY.....?
AND IF YOU CAN JUST WAIT...
IN THE FUTURE... MEDICAL SCIENCE WILL MAKE PROGRESS

SOMEONE WOULD TAKE CARE OF YOU .....!
IT'S NOTHING SPECIAL ...!
IN SHORT ...!
HAH HAH HAH ...!
TEN...
IT'S JUST NATURAL ...!
UNTIL I DIED...
WOULD LOOK AFTER ME FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS
AND SOMEBODY OR OTHER .....
EVEN IF THAT HAPPENED IN THE FUTURE...
IT DOESN'T MATTER ...!
TO ME ...

I'LL JUST DIE ON MY OWN...!
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH OTHER PEOPLE.
I COULDN'T LIVE MY LIFE ON MY OWN
IF
I'D HATE IT .....
URGH ...!
AKAGI ...!
TEN...
NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES .....!
I WANT TO DIE .....

IS WHAT I'M SAYING .....
SO STRANGE ...?
URGH ...!
KH...!
WHEN SOME-THING LIKE THIS COMES UP
FOR SOME REASON, EVERYONE ALWAYS
CALLS OUT "LIVE, LIVE!" WITH ONE VOICE.
THEY TAKE THE INARGUABLE POSITION THAT PEOPLE HAVE TO LIVE, BUT...
IN THE END ...
IS IT REALLY TRUE ...?

THEIR WORDS...
THE WORDS OF DOCTORS EAGER TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF THEIR PATIENT.
MEDICAL CARE JUST TO STAY ALIVE ...
IT'S .....
JUST KEEPING THEM ALIVE
OF THE PATIENT THEM-SELF...!
NEVER KNOWING THE WISHES
ARE BASICALLY THE SAME, AREN'T THEY.....?
PEOPLE DIE...!
IT'S FINE...
STRANGE FROM THE START .....?
ISN'T THAT IDEA...
AS LONG AS THEY'RE ALIVE, IT'S OKAY...
ONE MORE MINUTE, ONE MORE SECOND

TEN...
URGH ...!
GOING TO DIE ...!
I'M...
THE SELF...
IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN LIFE ...!

CHAPTER 160
A LIFETIME

ぞわ・・・
GH...!

HEH HEH...
.....
THIS KIND OF THING CAME UP
IN A CONVER-SATION A LITTLE WHILE AGO .....
I WONDER IF I CAN REMEMBER IT...?
SAY
THAT WHAT MAKES A "PERSON" IS NOTHING MORE THAN THEIR DNA...
LIFE'S LEADING ROLE
IS ONLY TO CREATE A "PERSON" OUT OF DNA .....!

OF COURSE ...
CER-TAIN-LY
WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE OVERALL TREND SINCE LIFE ITSELF BEGAN
YOU CAN SEE IT THAT WAY
OR AT LEAST MAYBE YOU CAN...!
BUT...
THAT'S ALL THERE IS.....!
JUST A "LIFE-TIME" ...!
WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE LONG, LONG TIME LIFE HAS BEEN AROUND
IT'S JUST A TWINKLE.
THAT IDEA OF A "PERSON'S LIFETIME" IS A WHOLE DIFFERENT STORY...!
.....

ざわ…
……
……
DIFF-
ERENT
…?
YEAH
…
THEN IT'S
A COMPLETE
TURN-
AROUND
…!
AT
LEAST
THAT'S
HOW IT
FEELS
…!
……
……
IN
SHORT
..
INCLUDING
DNA AND
ALL…
THIS
BODY
THIS
LIFE
…
IS MY
VEHICLE
……!

I'VE HAD THE LEADING ROLE ALL ALONG...!
LIFE IS WHAT CARRIES ME.....!
EXISTS SO THAT I CAN BE
ME...!
MY LIFE..
.....
AND I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON...
IS THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY ...!
WHEN MY CONCIOU-SNESS IS CLOUDED
JUST TO LIVE LONGER
SO...
I COME FIRST...!

I DON'T UNDER-STAND
WHAT DIFFERENCE IT WOULD MAKE.....!
AKAGI ...!
YOU'RE WRONG ...!
THE MAIN POINT IS .....
WHAT DOES IT MATTER .....
IF MY LIFE IS GONE .....?
NO ...!
NO, NO ...!
AKAGI ...!
YOU'RE TOTALLY WRONG .....!
IT WON'T BE GONE ...
SOMEHOW, AKAGI SHIGERU .....!
HEH HEH HEH ...

I'LL SAY IT AGAIN .....
ONCE AGAIN ...!
IT'S TRUE I WON'T BE COMPLETELY GONE
AND SOME-THING MAY REMAIN, BUT...
I HAVE NO USE FOR .....
A LIFE LIKE THAT ...!
AKAGI ...!
YOUR WAY OF THINKING .....
YOU'RE NARROW-MINDED...!
AKAGI .....!

HEH HEH ...
ARE YOU SO DETERMINED THAT IT DOESN'T MATTER...!
WHY ...
ギュ…
……
ゴ…ゴ…
ゴト…
ゴト…
LET'S HAVE A DRINK ...!
BRING A GLASS OVER ……

……Ooo。
ガタ…
トッ…
……
ゴクゴク…
ゴト
ゴト
。。

HERE ...!
カラ
カラ
カラ
STAY WITH ME
.....
FOR ONE LAST DRINK...!

URGH ...!
AS YOU SAY ...
WHY .....!?
HEH HEH HEH ...
AKAGI ...!

I AM NARROW-MINDED ...!
I'M JUST LIVING.....
THAT'S ALL...
THAT WAY OF THINKING ABOUT IT.....
IN SHORT
THAT THERE'S VALUE IN JUST BEING ALIVE...
THAT IDEA...
WAS A LOAD OF BULLSHIT THAT I HATED .....!
.....
HEH HEH ...
I'VE ALWAYS ..
BEEN A CONTRARY PERSON ...!

ULTIMATELY...
IT'S A PERSONAL PREFERENCE...!
SAYING THAT IF I BECOME USELESS
I MIGHT AS WELL DISAPPEAR IS
JUST THE WAY I AM .....!
I'M NEVER GOING TO BE ANYONE OTHER THAN MYSELF...!
THAT'S THE WAY I'VE LIVED FOR FIFTY YEARS... THAT'S HOW I THINK.....!
IN THE END...
SO
EVEN IF IT'S A MISTAKE TO THINK LIKE THAT

ONLY DEATH CAN CURE .....
A FOOL ...!
HEH HEH HEH ..

DON'T MAKE A FACE LIKE THAT.
HEY NOW...!
KH...!
THOUGH YOU COULD SAY
I WAS JUST THINKING IT HASN'T BEEN BAD.
I'M FINE.

THAT AFTER LIVING FOR FIFTY YEARS LIKE THIS...
OF COU-RSE
GETTING SICK LIKE THIS
WAS BAD LUCK.
THE WORST ...
THE WORST, BUT...
SOMEHOW, DESPITE THAT
I'LL GET TO DIE AS MYSELF .....!
THAT'S ENOUGH ...!
....
ENOUGH ...

TAKE YOUR GLASS ...!
HERE ...
.....
o.O
WE SHOULD DRINK TOGETHER .....!
カチッ

IT'S MY LAST DRINK ...!
URGH ...!
AKAGI ...!

.....
UURG ...!
.....
.....
UIRGH ...!

KH...!
GH...!

URGH ....!
UURG ...!
WELL...
IT'S ABOUT TIME, THEN .....?
AKAGI .....!
THANK YOU...
TEN...
THIS IS OUR FINAL FAREWELL .....!

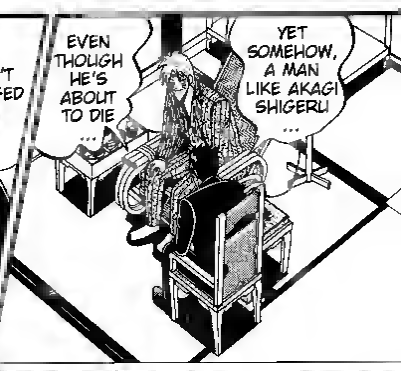
GH……!
.....
CHAPTER 161
FAMILY

NO ...!
AKAGI .....!
BE-CAUSE ...
YOU CAN'T LET IT END LIKE THIS .....!
NO...!
JUST...
HAVE SOMETHING LEFT TO DO...!
O
O
YOU...

HAVE DONE IT...
OF PEOPLE IN GENERAL

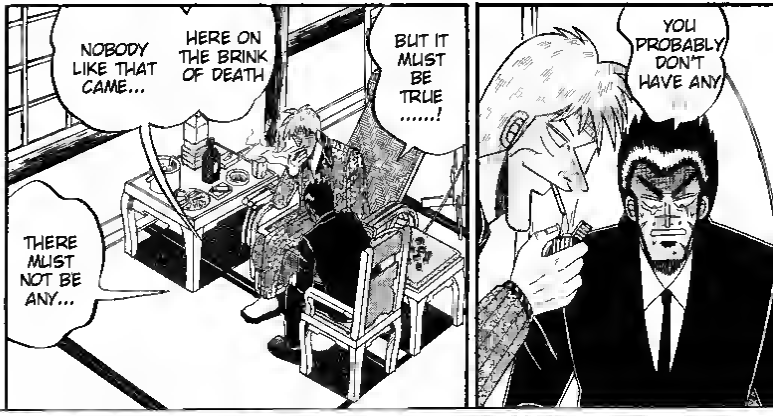
LOTS ...
OH...?

TO DO THAT...!
HASN'T MANAGED ...


EVEN THOUGH HE'S ABOUT TO DIE ...
YET SOMEHOW, A MAN LIKE AKAGI SHIGERU ...

YOU'VE BEEN TOO BUSY .....!
TOO BUSY ...
WITH GAMBLING ...
LIVING TOO MUCH LIKE A YAKUZA .....!
THAT YAKUZA LIFESTYLE ...
DEBAUCHERY ...
MADE YOU LOSE IT .....!
TAKING AKAGI AWAY FROM .....
FAMILY ...!

HEH HEH HEH .....
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF YOU HAVING ANY...!
NOBODY'S EVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT
... ...
AKAGI SHIGERU HAVING A FAMILY ...!


YOU PROBABLY DON'T HAVE ANY
BUT IT MUST BE TRUE .....!
HERE ON THE BRINK OF DEATH
NOBODY LIKE THAT CAME...
THERE MUST NOT BE ANY...

FIRST OF ALL
FROM THE VERY BEGINNING
YOU DIDN'T HANG OUT WITH ANYONE .....
DIDN'T TALK TO ANYONE .....
THAT I REMEMBER, ANYWAY .....!
YOU'VE ALWAYS KEPT YOUR DISTANCE
YOU LIMITED HOW CLOSE YOU BECAME ...!
YOU NEVER TRIED TO MAKE DEEP CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER PEOPLE.....!
WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT NOW
YOU... AVOIDED IT.....!
THAT FADED AWAY ...
YOU SAY YOU DON'T CARE IF YOU DIE...
BUT WHAT IF YOU DIDN'T ...!

YOU'LL RETIRE .....!
BUT IT'LL BE FINE .....!
OUR AKAGI CAN RETIRE FROM GAMBL-ING .....!
WITH A DISEASE LIKE THIS

AND...!
NOTHING TO BE DEPRESSED ABOUT...!
THERE'S ...
WHY.....
LET'S TAKE CARE OF THE OTHER THING .....!
LET'S BUILD ONE .....!
HEH HEH HEH ...
JOIN MINE ...!
PLEASE .....!
A FAMILY ...
THE THING AKAGI SHIGERU HASN'T DONE.....

I HAVE TWO WIVES .....!
IT ISN'T A NORMAL FAMILY.
IT'S OKAY .....!
TEN...
IT COULD BE HALF THE TROUBLE THIS WAY TOO...!
YOU COULD SAY THAT PART TAKES SOME EFFORT...
.....
JUST COME ON OVER .....!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
10 YEARS ...
3 YEARS, 5 YEARS ...
GET TO BE JUST A BIT CLOSER .....!
WE CAN
WE CAN DO IT .....!
AND ...

LAZY DAYS
OF LIVING TOGE-THER ...
SOMETIMES IT MAKES YOU ANGRY ...
AND SOMETIMES IT'S A PAIN BUT .....
YOU'LL GRADUALLY GET USED TO IT...!
FAMILY....
TAKES TIME ..... FOR ANYONE .....!
THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT THAT .....!
BUT..
I MEAN, YOU'RE ON THE BRINK OF DEATH, AREN'T YOU .....?
MY WIVES AND I...
AND YOU, AKAGI ...

EVEN IF WE'RE NOT TIED TOGETHER BY BLOOD...
IT'S A FAMILY ...!
.....
LET'S DO IT .....!

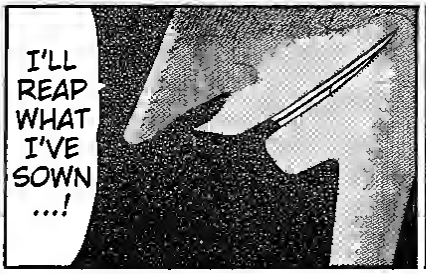
ONCE YOU'VE EXPERIENCED THAT
YOU CAN DIE.....!
IF YOU DON'T .....
I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO DIE .....
WITHOUT REGRETS ...!
I'D HAVE LET AKAGI SHIGERU
DIE ALONE...
I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TAKE THAT.....!

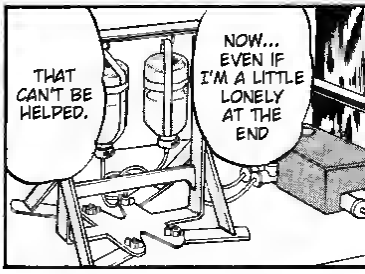
ボロ…ボロ
ボロ…
HEH HEH …

STOP IT.....!
AH, WELL ...
IT'S SUCH A WASTE, BUT...
TEN...
AKAGI .....!
THAT'S HOW IT WILL BE .....

SO...
I'VE DONE WHAT I FELT LIKE DOING.
I'M JUST PAYING THE PRICE.

NOBODY'S EVER RELIED ON ME...
I'M INDEPE-NDENT ...


I'LL REAP WHAT I'VE SOWN ...!


THAT CAN'T BE HELPED.
NOW... EVEN IF I'M A LITTLE LONELY AT THE END

NO ...!

ボロ ボロ
IT SUITS ME.....!

I...!
I DON'T WANT TO LET YOU DIE.....!
I...
I...

I'M SAYING .....
LIVE, FOR MY SAKE .....!
I'M NO MATCH FOR THAT ....
FROM YOU !!!
ボロ
ボロ
ボロ
GH ....!

NO ...
THEN ...!
AKAGI ...!
BE-CAUSE I'M ME ...
BUT ...
URGH ...!

AKAGI .....!
THANK YOU, TEN .....
FOR THOSE
FINAL KIND WORDS .....
IT'S SAVED ME...
EVEN WITHOUT FAMILY...
I...
AKAGI .....!
HAD MY FRIENDS .....
GOOD-BYE .....
HUH ...?

カチッ…
ON
OFF

ACTIVATION ...!
OF THE SUICIDE ASSIS-TANCE DEVICE ...!

THE MERCITRON ...!
AKAGI ...!
CHAPTER 163
REGRET

ブウ――ン…
KH …!
NO…!
WHY…
ギュッ

WHY ...
WON'T YOU UNDER-STAND ...!?
YOU STILL HAVE IT ...!
THE FIRE OF LIFE .....!

IF...
DON'T LET IT GO OUT .....!
ボロ!
I DON'T .....!
WHO KNOWS WHAT KIND OF MIRACLE COULD HAPPEN .....
IT DOESN'T GO OUT ...

HEH HEH ...
IT COULD HAPPEN .....!
TOMORROW THERE COULD BE A DRUG THAT WOULD FIX EVERYTHING.
TEN...

BUT ...

IT'S A LITTLE LATE...

I'VE THOUGHT OF THAT TOO...

HUH ...?
JUST LIKE THE DEAD
CAN'T ...
COME BACK TO LIFE AGAIN...
ONCE THEY'RE LOST...
MY BRAIN CELLS ARE GONE FOREVER .....!
SO IT'S THE SAME THING .....
EVEN IF SOMETHING COULD BE DONE NOW ...!
BUT .....

I HAVE A FEELING ...!
AKAGI ...!
IS FULL OF HOLES ...!
RIGHT NOW, MY BRAIN ...
NO... MAYBE EVEN TOMORROW...
IN A CERTAIN NUMBER OF DAYS...
IN ANOTHER TWO OR THREE DAYS ....
IF THAT HAPPENS .....
URGH ...!
I WILL LOSE A LOT MORE .....!
THAT WILL...

THAT CONVICTION I HAVE RIGHT NOW ...
MIGHT DISAPPEAR ...!
GH...!
AND SO...
I HAVE TO DIE .....
NOW ...

URGH ...!
GH ...!
GHGHGH .....!

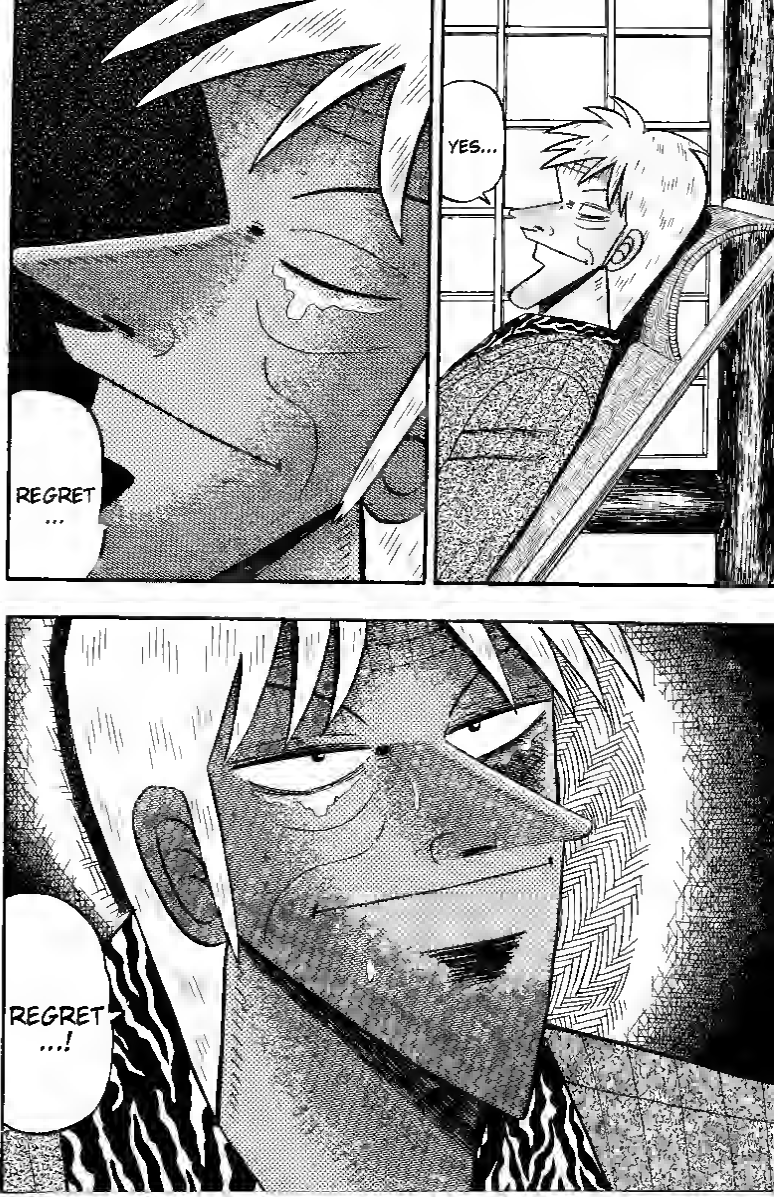
HUH~?!
WHY .....!
WHY .....!
DAMN IT .....!

AN EMOTION YOU HAVEN'T FELT...
THERE HAS TO BE.....!
THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ...!
DAMN THIS WORLD .....!

AM I WRONG ...!?
ボロ!
ボロ!
ボロ!
STOP SCREWING AROUND .....!
AKAGI ...!
OR AM I RIGHT .....!
YOU CAN'T DIE YET .....
AKAGI ...!
NOT YET...
IT'S TOO SOON .....!

AKAGI .....!
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY REGRETS ...!

URGH ...!
HEH HEH ...
OO
.....
.....


YES...
REGRET ...
REGRET ...!

AKAGI ...!
I REGRET DYING .....
ABOUT IT EITHER ...!
I CAN'T DO ANY-THING
BUT ...
IF YOU DO, THEN ...
BUT SOME-TIMES
LIVING ...!
IT NEVER GOES LIKE YOU EXPECT IT WILL...
"PROOF OF BEING ALIVE" .....!
HAVING REGRETS IS
DOES IT A GREAT DISSERVICE ...!
RELUC-TANTLY CONTINUING WHEN IT'S COMPLETELY UNREASON-ABLE...

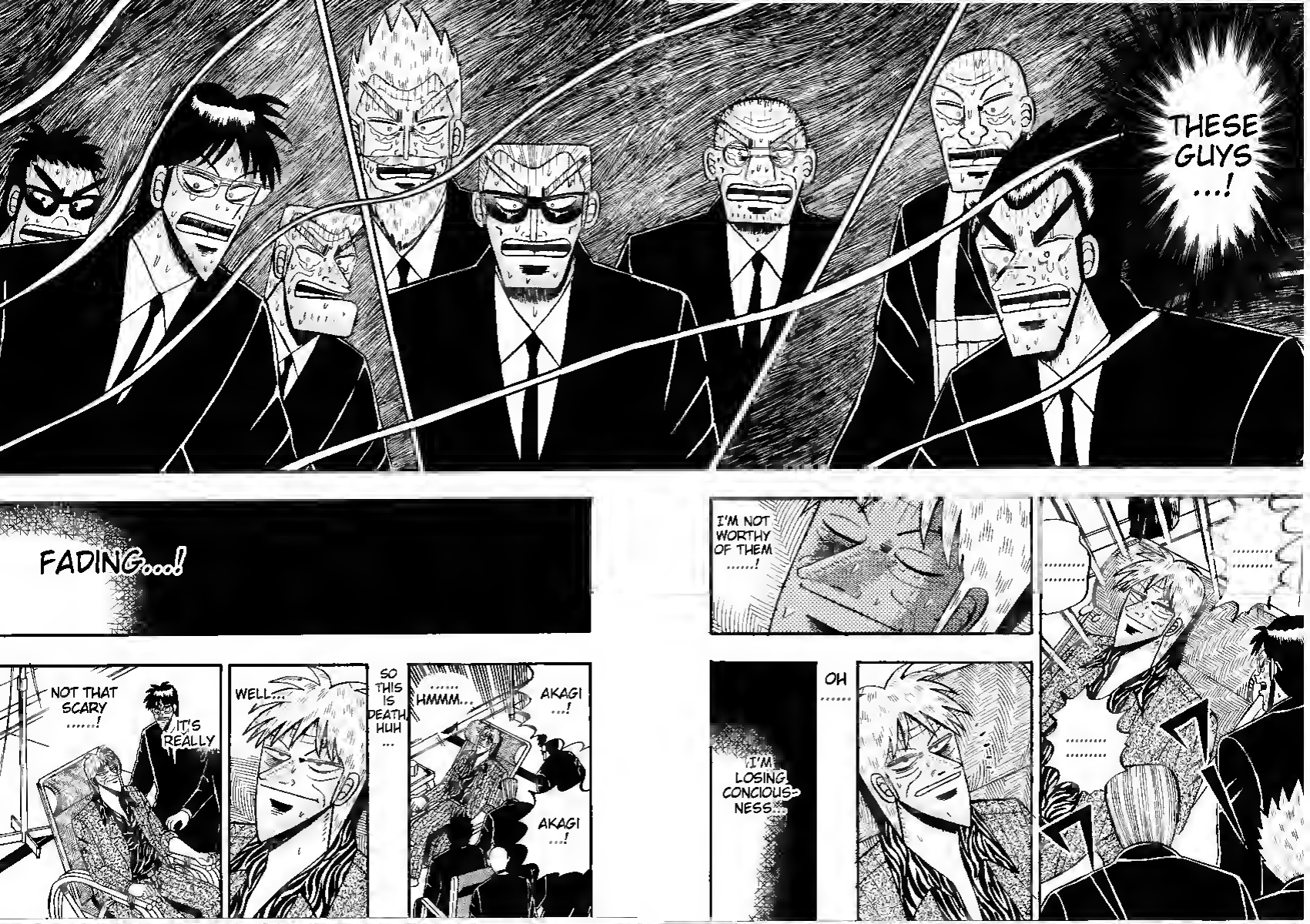
IS WHAT MAKES YOUR "DESIRES" SHINE .....
REGRET
IT'S PROBABLY FINE.....
BUT .....
AND... HAVING A FEW DESIRES.
I DIDN'T HATE IT.....
I'VE COME TO TERMS WITH THE CURRENT REALITY...!
AT THE SAME TIME
... ...
PROB-ABLY ...
WAS WHAT I LIKED .....
LIVING LIKE THAT
WE'VE MADE PEACE WITH EACH OTHER .....
RELUC-TANTLY

EVEN LOVED...
REGRET ...!
GH ...!
ボロ
SO...
THIS IS FINE ...!
REMOVE YOUR HAND...
URGH ...!
AKA...

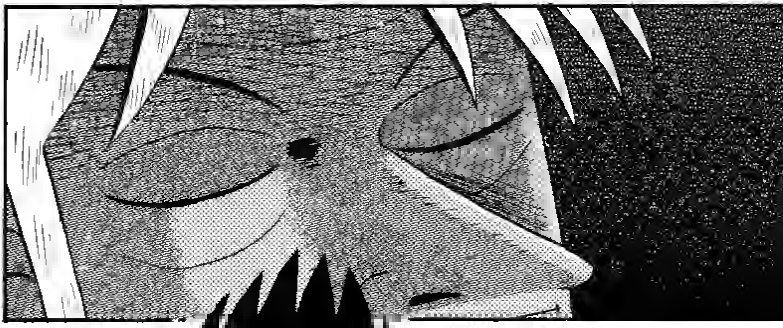
YOU GUYS ...!
Y...
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
わっ...
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!

I'M HOLDING BACK THE DRUGS.....!
LIKE THIS ...!
HE PUSHED THE SWITCH, BUT...
WHAT'S GOING ON.....?
TEN ...!
HUH ...?
TAKE IT OUT...!
BUT ...
IT'S GOING TO LEAK THROUGH ...!
YOU MORON ...!
HAD FAILED TO STOP PART OF THE FLUID FROM THE MERCITRON
ONLY A TINY AMOUNT GOT THROUGH BUT...
TEN'S GRIP ON THE TUBING ..
BY THAT TIME

THE SOLUTION OF SODIUM CHLORIDE AND SUCCINYLCHOLINE THAT WOULD STOP AKAGI'S HEART...
A LITTLE BIT.....
AND...
THE THIOPENTAL THAT LED HIM INTO A DEEP SLEEP
IT SLIPPED THROUGH ... AND WENT IN .....!
AKAGI ...!
AWAY FROM HIS "LIFE" .....!
TEARING AKAGI...
WENT IN..... TO AKAGI'S BODY...!
SO THEY SHOWED UP...
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
GOOD INTUITION, THESE GUYS ...
HEH HEH ...
..... OH .....


THESE GUYS ...!
FADING....!
NOT THAT SCARY .....!
IT'S REALLY
WELL....
SO THIS IS DEATH HUH ...
.....
HMMM...
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
I'M NOT WORTHY OF THEM .....!
OH .....
I'M LOSING CONCIOUS-NESS...
.....
.....
.....
.....

NOTHING.....



AKAGI ...!
CHAPTER 163
COMPLETE

AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!

AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
HEY ...!
COME ON..!
HEY...!

.....
.....
.....
.....
RELEASE IT.....

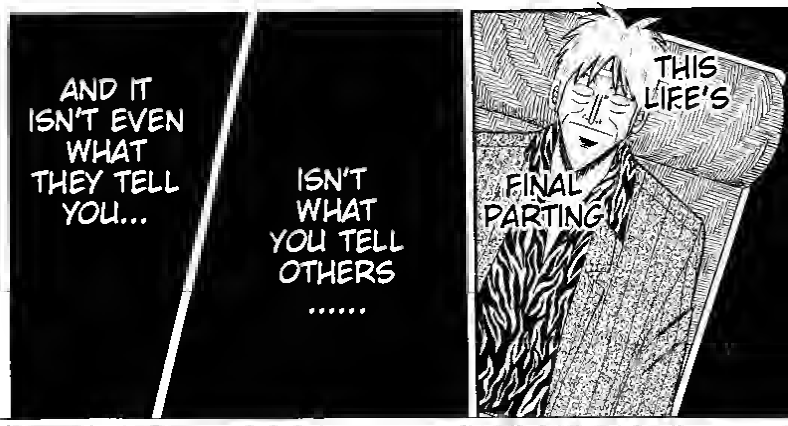
THIS LIFE
.....

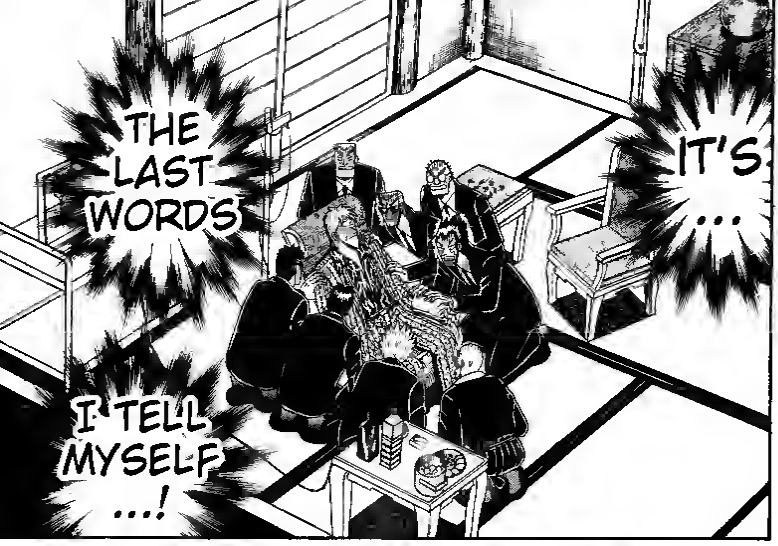
WHEN I REALIZED.....

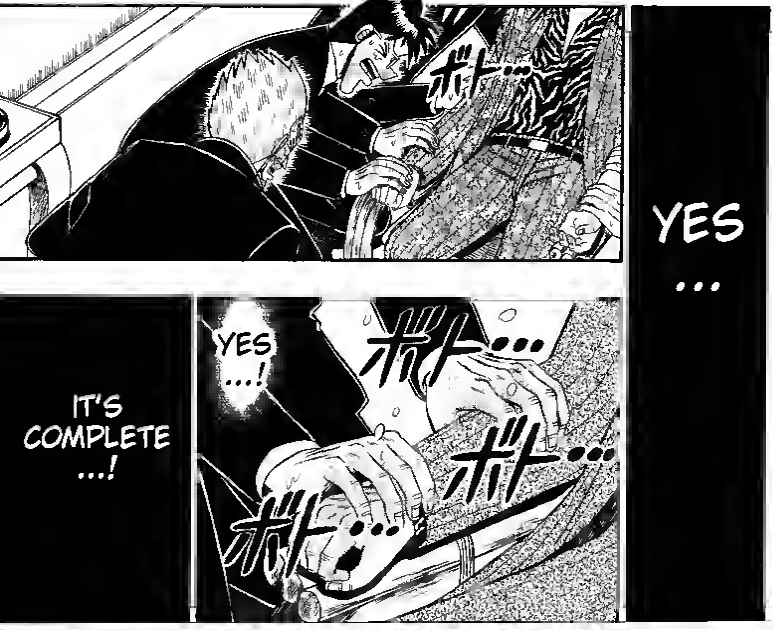
WHAT I HAD IN MY HANDS.....

THIS ILLUSION KNOWN AS AKAGI SHIGERU...

CONCIOUSNESS...




THE LAST WORDS
IT'S ...
I TELL MYSELF ...!


ボト...
YES ...
YES ...!
ボト...
ボト...
ボト...
IT'S COMPLETE ...!

PROBABLY...
A PERSON IS COMPLETE WHEN THEY DIE!!....!
I'M...
FINE WITH DYING.....!
ME... FROM MYSELF...!
RELEASING...!

THE WIND...!

WHAT IS THIS WIND...?
BUT...
IT'S SUCH A GOOD WIND ...!
SCATTER .....

LET MYSELF BLOW AWAY WITH THE LEAVES .....!
AH...
YES .....
DISAPPEAR ...!
DISAPPEAR...

GOOD...
GO...!
SO THIS IS DEATH ...
LET GO .....!

SCATTER
IN THE
WIND,
AKAGI
SHIGERU
...!

AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
HUH ...?

AKAGI ...!
ボロ…

AKAGI ...!
AKAGI .....!
AKAGI ...
AKA...

GH...!

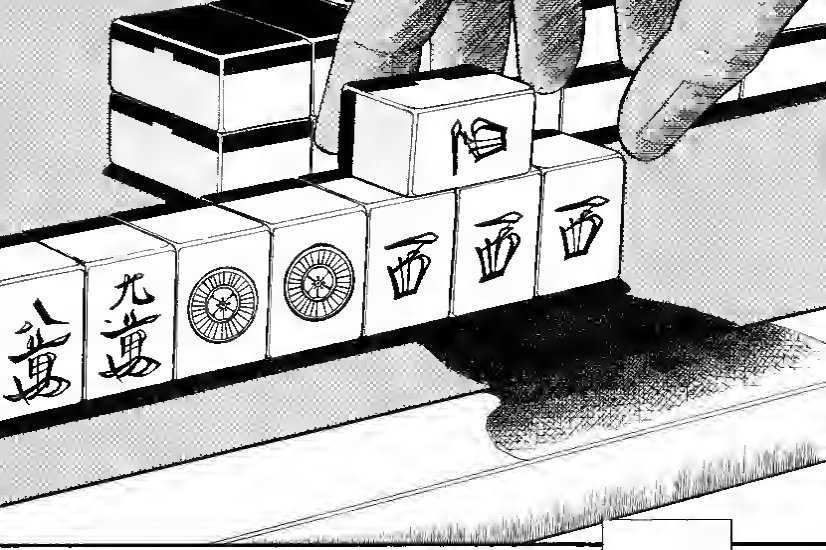
GH...!
AKAGI .....!
RIGHT THEN ...
.....
.....
.....
.....
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI ...!
AKAGI SHIGERU ...
ボロ
ボロ

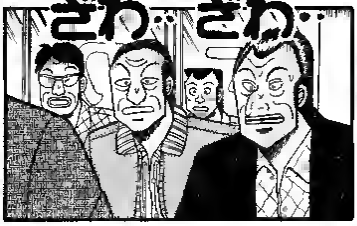
AS IF
HE WAS FAINTLY SMILING.
LOOKED LIKE
THANKING "LIFE" ITSELF .....
AND...
HE WAS THANKING EVERYONE WHO HAD GATHERED
SEPT-EMBER 26TH, 1999
THAT KIND OF QUIET, GENUINE SMILE...
IT WAS
THAT WAS WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE.
THANKING HIS OWN LIFE THAT HAD NOW ENDED.....!

AKAGI SHIGERU, DEAD AT THE AGE OF 53.

REST IN PEACE...

FINAL CHAPTER
FRAGMENT




ざわ…ざわ…

FEBRUARY
2002

2 YEARS
AND
5 MONTHS
AFTER
AKAGI'S
DEATH.

七萬
KAN
...!

WHOA ...!
IT'S A FULL-ON HIT ...!
4 DORA ...!
RIICHI ...!
HIRO-YUKI
GH ...!

HE WAS GOING TO WORK ALONGSIDE TEN.
ピシッ
AFTER THE FUNERAL
QUIT THE COMPANY HE WORKED FOR
...
FREE TO ROAM 10 OR 20-POINT MAHJONG PARLORS
IS HOW HE THOUGHT HE WOULD LIVE, BUT...
ON TEN'S ADVICE
BUT ONCE IN A LONG WHILE...
HE BECAME AN INSTRUCTOR WHO TAUGHT MAHJONG TO THE OLDER CROWD.
THAT BECAME HIS PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME.
WHEN HE WAS ASKED BY OWNERS OF MAHJONG PARLORS THAT HE KNEW
HE PLAYED MAH-JONG.
ドドドド

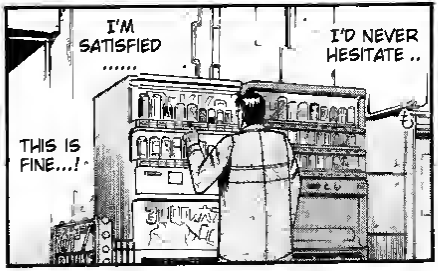
SERIOUS MAHJONG
THEY ASKED HIM TO DEAL WITH PEOPLE LIKE THAT.
THAT THEY WEREN'T ALLOWED IN DIDN'T WORK
WHEN TELLING TROUBLE-SOME CUSTOMERS LIKE YAKUZA
THAT HE CONTRACTED OUT AS.
THAT WAS THE KIND OF SERIOUS MAHJONG REP PLAYER
NEED-LESS TO SAY
IT WAS A GAME TO CHASE TROUBLE AWAY.
ACTING UNDER THAT PROMISE
THAT CUSTOMER MUST NOT COME BACK AGAIN.
IN OTHER WORDS, ON THE MAHJONG PARLOR'S SIDE .. IF HIROYUKI WON
AND THEY'D STAY, TOO...!
THE SHOP WOULD HAVE TO HAND OVER SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND YEN TO THE ENEMY.
IF HIROYUKI LOST

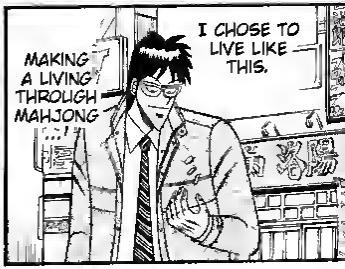
FOR THE MAHJONG PARLOR ..... IT WAS A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH ...!
TSUMO ...!
YOU DID IT ...!
GH ...!
RIICHI, TSUMO, 4 DORA: HANEMAN ...!
IN OTHER WORDS
OHO ...!
THAT MAKE IT 310 POINTS THAT HE'S AHEAD.....!
THERE'S STILL TWO HAN-CHAN LEFT, BUT..
IT'S A 14000-POINT LIPSET .....!
THAT WRAPS IT UP .....!
ざわ..
OUR SIDE COULD GO BELOW ZERO TWICE AND WE'D STILL BE SAFE...!
EVEN IF THE OTHER SIDE TAKES THE LEAD IN NINE OR TEN ROUNDS
IT'S FINE NOW...!
HE... HE DID IT...!
HE DID IT...!

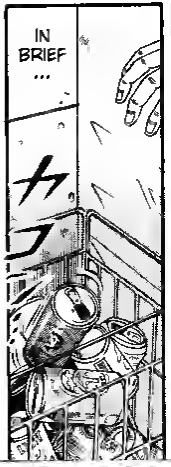
EEP...!
URGH ...!
HE DID IT...!
SHADDUP ...
I'M FINISHE ...!
BUT LIKE YOU SAY ...
EH...
BUT .....
わっ...
NO, NO, WE SHOULD THANK YOU...!
THANK YOU.
IT'S FINE.
IT'S ONLY A LITTLE, BUT...

BUT...
NOT A BAD WAGE .....
500,000 YEN IN LESS THAN SIX HOURS
LOOKING DOWN FROM ABOVE
IT WAS ALWAYS ON HIS MIND.
BASIC-ALLY
THIS SORT OF WORK DIDN'T COME ALONG SO OFTEN...
WITHOUT A STEADY JOB, A GAMBLER HAS TO BE QUICK ON HIS FEET...!

I DON'T MIND THAT .....!
BUT..


I'M SATISFIED .....
I'D NEVER HESITATE ..
THIS IS FINE...!


I CHOSE TO LIVE LIKE THIS.
MAKING A LIVING THROUGH MAHJONG ...!


IN BRIEF ...

YOU SHOULD FOLLOW YOUR HEART ...!
SO AS MUCH AS YOU CAN .....

DIE SOME-DAY ...!

NO MATTER WHAT .....
PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS .....

LIVE LIKE AKAGI.....
AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE...!
I GUESS I'LL GO CHECK IN WITH HIM ...
I'M AT MY LIMIT FOR TODAY...!
AND I LOST TWICE ...
IT WENT WELL TWICE TODAY...
THAT...
IF IT WAS AKAGI, HE WOULDN'T PLAY LIKE THAT...
HEH HEH ...

I SUDDENLY REALIZED
I'M ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT AKAGI...
WHEN AKAGI WAS ALIVE...
THOSE NINE YEARS AFTER THE EAST-WEST BATTLE
I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT HIM.....
YAMP
IT WAS UNUSUAL... AT THAT TIME ..
CLEARLY ...!
IT'S LIKE AFTER HE DIED
HE STARTED TO LIVE..
THAT AKAGI SHIGERU ...!
OH...?
AH...?
IN MY HEART ...!
OH, HEY ...!
ARE YOU GOING TOO .....?
TEN .....!
YEAH ...
AKAGI'S GRAVE ...

FROM K STATION ON THE CHUOU LINE.
WAS IN A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT, 15 MINUTES' WALK
RATHER THAN HAVE HIS GRAVE IN SOME DISTANT PLACE, FAR AWAY FROM HIS FRIENDS
"A GRAVEYARD IN A PLACE LIKE THAT...?"
AS TEN INTENDED ...!
THE PLACE WAS CHOSEN
IT WAS BUILT IN A NEIGHBOR-HOOD A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY.
A SMALL ONE WAS ENOUGH.
IT REALLY WASN'T MUCH OF A GRAVE ..

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE CERTAIN THING...!
EVEN
WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT NOW ...
I STILL THINK ABOUT IT SOMETIMES ..
I KNOW IT'S POINTLESS, BUT.....
HUH .....?
..... 00

I COULD HAVE STOPPED IT.....!
I COULD HAVE STOPPED HIM...
?
BACK THEN
WHEN I GRABBED THE TUBING
I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO SLOW ON THE UPTAKE.
IF I'D PULLED IT OUT...
AT LEAST
AKAGI WOULDN'T HAVE DIED THEN.....!
.....
TEN...

.....
.....
NO...!
THE WAY HE DIED WAS TRUE TO HIMSELF.
THAT'S WHAT I THINK...!
GLAD IT HAPPENED THE WAY IT DID...
I'M
WELL ...
AND STOPPING HIM WOULD HAVE BEEN ...
IGNORING THAT
SO...
IT WAS AKAGI'S WILL .....!

I STILL REGRET IT.....
THAT IS TRUE, BUT...
THAT'S TRUE ...
IN THE END
WAS IT OKAY? .....
THAT'S WHAT I REGRET .....
.....
.....
STILL ...
IT WAS A BAD WAY TO HAVE IT SET UP .....
.....

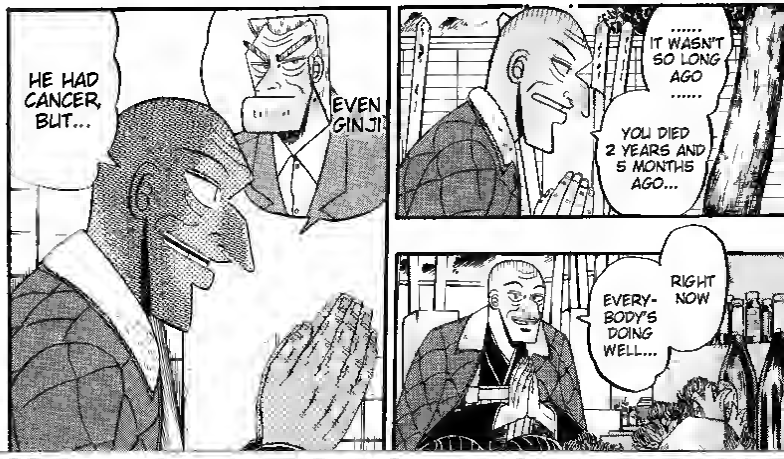
BUT, YOU KNOW.....
IT WAS A BIT OF A RELIEF .....
THE AKAGI IN MY MEMORY .....
EVEN THOUGH HE WAS A MAN THAT DIDN'T SMILE LIKE THAT
IS ALWAYS SMILING .....!
HUH ...?
THAT HE WAS SMILING ...

I WONDER WHAT HE MEANT ...
WHEN HE SAID HE'D BEEN SAVED .....
WITH THAT SMILING FACE...!
UH...
... ...

.....
IT'S TRUE
...!
HE SMILED
...
AT ME TOO...!
TEN
...!
HE WAS SMILING AT ME TOO
...!
HEH HEH
...
I REMEMBER HIS SMILE
...!
...
...
...
THEN...
I GUESS
...
WE SHOULD BE GLAD
.....
WITH THAT SMILE ON HIS FACE
I COULD HAVE WORRIED, BUT...
WELL
...

TEN...
I'M GLAD ABOUT THAT...
I GUESS
OH...?
.....
..
HUH...?
SOME-ONE GOT HERE BEFORE US...!
HIRO ...
DON'T SEE THAT OFTEN ...
HEY.
.....

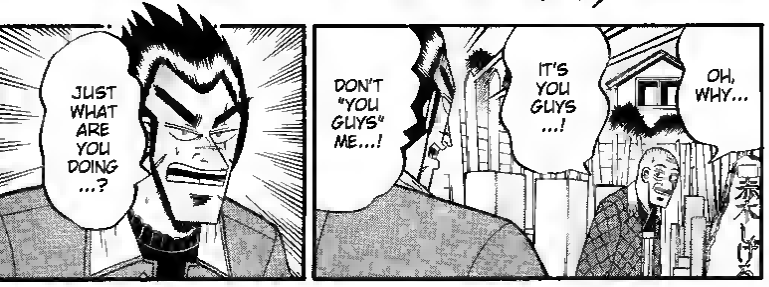
.....
IT'S THE PRIEST ...!

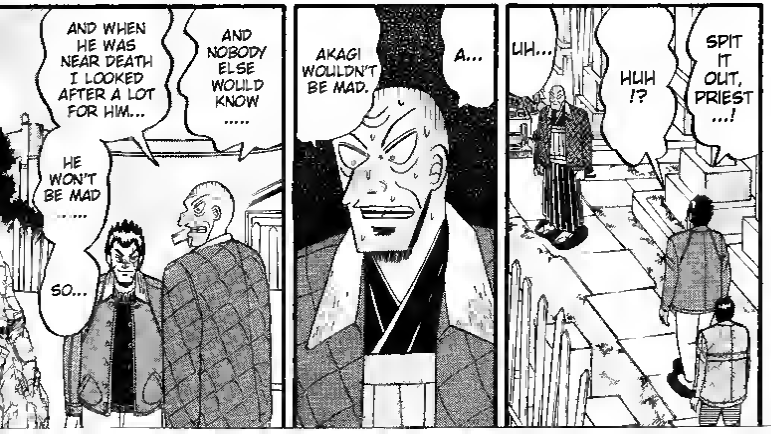

HE HAD CANCER, BUT...
EVEN GINJI
..... IT WASN'T SO LONG AGO .....
YOU DIED 2 YEARS AND 5 MONTHS AGO...
RIGHT NOW EVERY-BODY'S DOING WELL...

FOR A TREATMENT TO STRENGTHEN HIS IMMUNE RESPONSE.
SOMETHING ABOUT TAKING BLOOD OUT AND PUTTING IT IN
I'M NOT SURE, BUT...
SOMEHOW... THROUGH ADOPTIVE IMMUNOTHERAPY OR SOMETHING...
AND THIS, SOMEHOW
I'M IN GOOD SHAPE NOW .....
I'LL STILL BE KICKING AROUND.....!
IT SEEMS LIKE HE'LL BE AROUND THE MAHJONG TABLES IN THIS WORLD A WHILE YET.
AT LEAST
FOR NOW ANYWAY ...
IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE HE'S GOING TO DIE ...
WELL....
SO YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT...!

IT'LL BE A LITTLE WHILE LONGER...
RIGHT ...
AKAGI ...!
NOW THEN ...
.....
ﾌﾞﾙﾙ
I'M JUST GOING TO TAKE A BIT AGAIN .....!
SORRY, BUT...
WHEW ...
YOU'RE REALLY POPULAR, EVEN UP IN IWATE...
IN GREAT DEMAND... I GUESS YOU COULD SAY...
SO SORRY, BUT...
RIGHT HERE .....

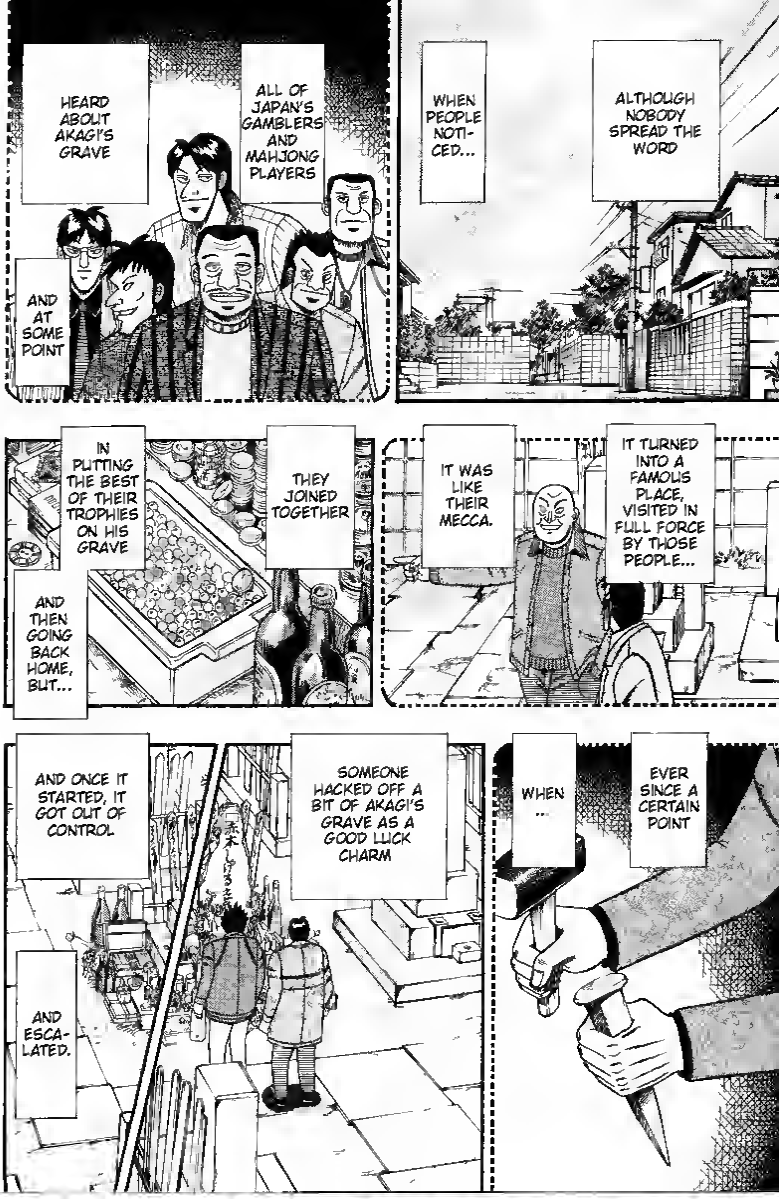
WHA...!
WHA...!
WHA...!
HEY YOU ...!


JUST WHAT ARE YOU DOING ...?
DON'T "YOU GUYS" ME...!
IT'S YOU GUYS ...!
OH, WHY...


AND WHEN HE WAS NEAR DEATH I LOOKED AFTER A LOT FOR HIM...
AND NOBODY ELSE WOULD KNOW .....
HE WON'T BE MAD ..... SO...
AKAGI WOULDN'T BE MAD.
A...
UH...
HUH !?
SPIT IT OUT, PRIEST ...!

IT DOESN'T MATTER ...!
IF I TAKE SOME ...!
AH ...!
TO MY TEMPLE ...!
I'M WEAK WHEN IT COMES TO THE PEOPLE THAT COME
PRIEST ...!
HEY...!
SORRY.
AH..!
SORRY ...!

BUT ...
.....
HEH HEH ...
DAMMIT ...!
.....
.....
.....
YEAH ...
.....
AKAGI'S GRAVE
HEH HEH...
PEOPLE ARE CARELESS .....!
IT'S GOTTEN REALLY BAD, HASN'T IT.....
AKAGI'S GRAVE ...!
赤木しげるの墓
WAS ALREADY IN RUINS AFTER 2 AND A HALF YEARS...
IN A TERRIBLE STATE TO LOOK AT.


HEARD ABOUT AKAGI'S GRAVE
ALL OF JAPAN'S GAMBLERS AND MAHJONG PLAYERS
AND AT SOME POINT
WHEN PEOPLE NOTICED...
ALTHOUGH NOBODY SPREAD THE WORD
IN PUTTING THE BEST OF THEIR TROPHIES ON HIS GRAVE
THEY JOINED TOGETHER
AND THEN GOING BACK HOME, BUT...
IT WAS LIKE THEIR MECCA.
IT TURNED INTO A FAMOUS PLACE, VISITED IN FULL FORCE BY THOSE PEOPLE...
AND ONCE IT STARTED, IT GOT OUT OF CONTROL
SOMEONE HACKED OFF A BIT OF AKAGI'S GRAVE AS A GOOD LUCK CHARM
AND ESCALATED.
WHEN...
EVER SINCE A CERTAIN POINT

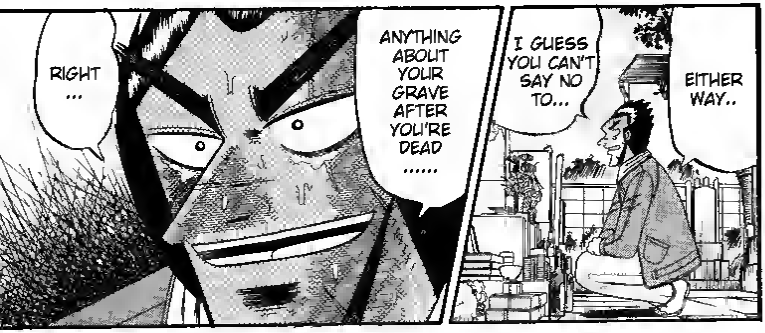
赤木しげる
THERE WAS NO QUES-TION
THAT IN THOSE 2.5 YEARS
CLOSE TO A THIRD OF AKAGI'S GRAVE HAD BEEN CHIPPED AWAY.
.....
THEY'RE A BUNCH OF IDIOTS ...
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT ...!
IT'S NOT GONNA MAKE THEM WIN...!
JUST LOOK AT WHAT THEY BROUGHT .....!
HEH HEH ...
OH, WOW ...
IT'S RIDICU-LOUS, LEAVING THESE THINGS HERE ...!
CASINO CHIPS FROM SOMEWHERE ...
PACHI-SLOT COINS ...
BOXES OF PACHINKO BALLS ...

WHY WOULD ANYONE LEAVE A LIGHTER HERE .....!
HOW .....
DID IT END UP THIS WAY...!
HEH HEH ...
OVER HERE
THERE'S ENERGY DRINKS AND PILLS...
IN OTHER WORDS...
THINGS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH GAMBLING .....!
赤木
YEAH ...
IDIOTS ...!
SOMEONE PUT A COLD PACK ON HIS GRAVE ...!
HA HA HA ...
MUST BE TO KEEP HIS HEAD COOL WHEN IT GET WARM OUT.
IDIOTS ...!
STICK IT ON YOUR OWN HEAD ...!
HEH HEH HEH ..
.....
BUT...

THEY MUST BE HAPPY...
REALLY
I... DIDN'T KNOW .....
THAT AFTER HE DIED
THIS IS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN ...
Marlboro
PEOPLE ADORED HIM .....
.....
PROB-ABLY ...
ALL OF THEM ...
HAVE A FRAGMENT OF AKAGI
SO THAT IT'S LIKE THEY'RE GAMBLING ALONG WITH AKAGI...
LIKE THEY'RE LIVING WITH HIM...
SO I WOULDN'T BE THAT BOTHERED ABOUT IT...
.....
.....
.....
IT'S SCATTER-ING ...

A LITTLE OF AKAGI
INTO EVERY-ONE'S HEART ...!
WELL ...
.....
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS...
AKAGI ...
YOU'RE TAKING IT WELL.
I CAN'T DO ANY-THING ABOUT THEM ...!
THEY'RE A BUNCH OF IDIOTS ...
I CAN'T CONTROL THEM...
I'M NOT SMART ENOUGH TO...!
HEH HEH ..

THEY'RE DAMN THIEVES, BUT...
BUT...
IF THEY TREASURE THOSE FRAGMENTS
DON'T BE STINGY ...
AND LET THEM TAKE THEM ...
AKAGI ...


EITHER WAY..
I GUESS YOU CAN'T SAY NO TO...
ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR GRAVE AFTER YOU'RE DEAD .....
RIGHT ...

SO FORGIVE THEM ..
ALL OF THEM..
Mandom

わむけ・だるさ
Mari-churo
Marldoro

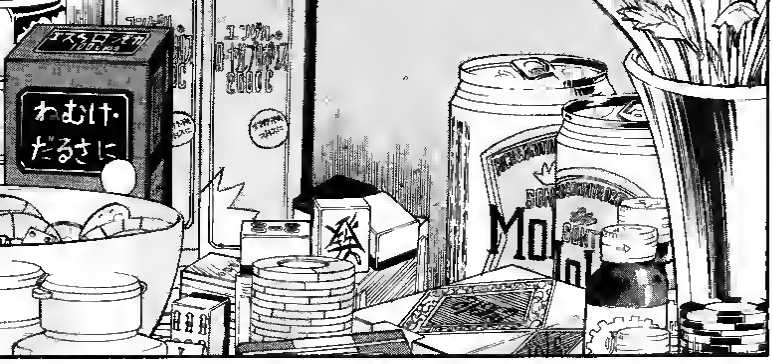
IT'S ONLY BECAUSE ...
THEY LIKE YOU ...!

BY THE WAY .....
HM...?
HOW ABOUT YOU, TEN...?
DO YOU HAVE ONE ...?
OF THOSE FRAG-MENTS OF GRAVE-STONE ...
MORON ...!
ARGH!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, COME ON...!

HUH...!?
I'VE GOT ONE .....!
WHAAA~!
JUST... A LITTLE OFF THE SIDE...
IT WAS PRETTY QUICK.....
YOU DO...?
WHICH IS IT...?
UM, I...
DO YOU HAVE ONE OR NOT...?
HUH...?
WHAT ABOUT YOU...?
YOU HAVE ONE ..... HA HA HA...!
DON'T LAUGH AT ME ...!

HA HA HA ...!
I HAVE ONE ...
IDIOT ...!
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE A GOOD THING TO HAVE...!
BUT...
IDIOT ...!
HEH HEH ...
HEH HEH HEH ...
A ROCK IS A ROCK .....!
OF COURSE IT ISN'T ...!
WE'RE A BUNCH OF FOOLS ...!
ZERO PRO-GRESS ...
WE CAN'T BEEN HELPED .....

AKAGI MUST BE SMILING...
HEH HEH HEH...
HEH HEH...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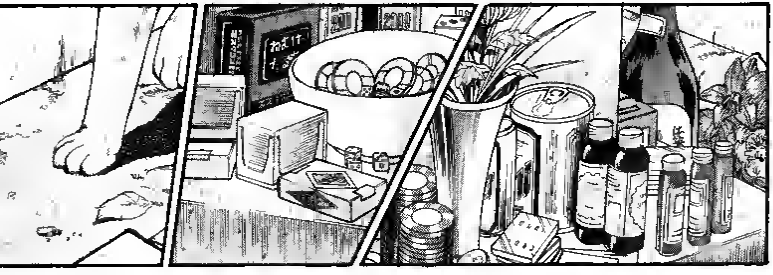
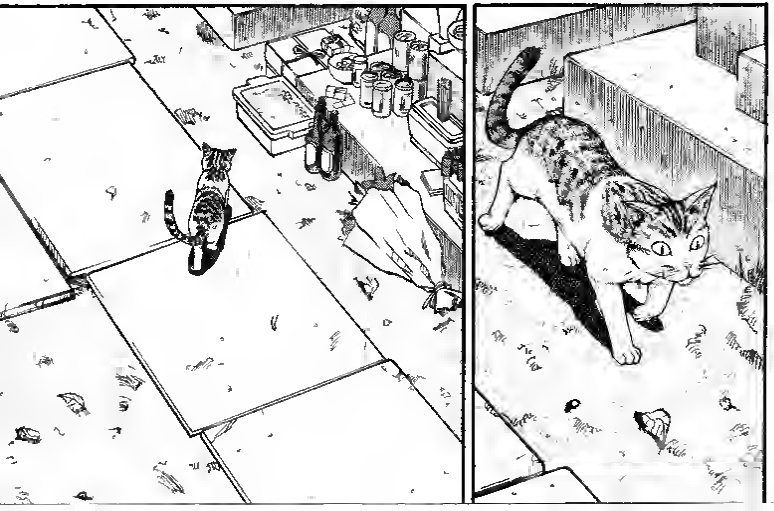
だるさに





南無遍照金剛
南無遍照金剛
南無遍照金剛
南無遍照金剛
赤木しげるの墓